4 Easy Steps to Fermenting Chicken Feed

There are very simple easy steps you can take when fermenting chicken feed. It literally takes minutes. Fermenting chicken feed will greatly increase the available nutrients in the grains, improve digestibility and provide natural probiotic (healthy) organisms. Another benefit of fermenting chicken feed is that your chickens will eat less and still receive great nutrition and plenty to eat. During the hot summer months here, I like to occasionally serve the chickens fermented feed because they are naturally eating less grain anyway, due to the heat. This way I ensure that they are getting the nutrients they need, in addition to the foraging they do on their own.
First step

Gather your supplies

you can use:

A half gallon or gallon mason jar

A glass beverage dispenser

A large food grade plastic bucket

a large deep glass bowl

The grains

Any grains commonly fed to chickens can be used in the fermenting vessel. I use a mixture of chicken layer ration, scratch, added whole oats, sunflower seeds, and flax seeds. Don’t use too much of the layer crumble ration because it will make it hard to strain from the liquid after the fermenting is done. I keep this percentage to about 1/3 total volume and the rest is whole or cracked grains
De-Chlorinated water

If you do not have a water filter, just let the water sit out for about 24 hours and the chlorine will dissipate on its own.

My vessel of choice is a half gallon canning jar. It makes enough for each flock for one feeding, once fermented. I then rotate through the jars, refilling the empty jars.

**Step 1.** Place the dry grain into the jar- about 3/4 full. Do not pack down! There must be some room left for expansion

**Step 2.** add the de-chlorinated water to the jar to completely cover the grain but still leaving some room for expansion. Grain left uncovered by the water will become moldy and you do not want to feed moldy grain to your chickens!
Step 3. Cover the container loosely with a thin dish towel or linen napkin, something breathable. Stir the grain daily from the bottom, and add additional water if needed to keep the grain submerged.
You will see bubbles starting to form and a sourdough bread smell begin to develop. It should not smell bad, rancid or moldy. IF you think it smells rotten, please throw it in the garbage! I wouldn’t take the chance of feeding anything questionable to my flock and wouldn’t want you to either.

Now for the Waiting (Don’t worry, it’s not a long process!)

The fermenting process takes three to four days. The grain should look soft and smell delicious!

**Step 4.** Strain the grain from the liquid. I save the liquid for reuse. The liquid is already full of valuable probiotics and can be used to start the next batch of fermented chicken feed. Pour it into another jar or back into the one you just used and add grain, more water and continue the cycle.
Feed the Chickens!

The chickens are going to know you have something good as you start to feed them. I try to spread out the fermented chicken feed in a few feed dishes so everyone of them gets a chance. I am sure your flock has the chickens who push others out of the way too!

Not only is fermented chicken feed full of good nutrition, it should make a noticeable impact on your wallet too.

If you are interested in making your own chicken feed, you may enjoy this post The Frugal Chicken

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